



H1N1 Partner and School Briefing

Date: December 9, 2009
To: All Rhode Islanders
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Re: Information on H1N1 and school-based vaccination clinics in Rhode Island

Local Influenza Activity Level: Widespread¹, H1N1 predominant circulating strain

Rhode Island²: 352 hospitalized cases, 9 deaths

Sentinel Surveillance (% of visits due to influenza-like illness)³: Rhode Island: 3.02%, New England Region: 3.3%, Nation: 3.54%

Stay healthy this holiday season

The Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) reminds all Rhode Islanders to practice healthful hygiene when gathering with family and friends this holiday season. Individuals can help prevent the spread of H1N1 flu by washing their hands regularly with warm water and soap or alcohol-based hand gels, by coughing and sneezing into their sleeves, and most importantly by staying home and avoiding social gatherings when ill. For all of HEALTH's flu prevention recommendations, see <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/prevention/>.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched a public awareness campaign to help travelers stay healthy this flu season. This campaign includes the recommendation that individuals with the flu or flu-like illness wait to travel until they have been fever-free (temperature less than 100.4°F/38°C) for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. More information for travelers is available at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/content/novel-h1n1-flu.aspx>.

H1N1 vaccine in pediatricians' offices as of December 16 for school-age children

As of December 16, children in kindergarten through grade 12 who missed their **first doses** of H1N1 vaccine at their schools' H1N1 vaccination clinics may be vaccinated by their Rhode Island pediatricians and family physicians. Whether children receive injectable or intranasal vaccine will be determined by childrens' medical histories and health care providers' vaccine supplies. HEALTH will provide second doses of H1N1 vaccine in January to school-age children (K-12) who are younger than 10 years of age in a second round of school-based clinics. Children who are 10 years of age and older do not require second doses of H1N1 vaccine.

Guidance to nursing home and long-term care facility administrators

Nursing homes and long-term care facilities should refer to HEALTH's guidance on mask and respirator use when implementing infection control measures in their facilities. This guidance is available on HEALTH's website at <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/H1N1Advisories/SurgicalMasksN95Respirators.pdf>.

H1N1 vaccination schedule

HEALTH's detailed H1N1 vaccination schedule contains vaccination information for different groups in Rhode Island, including groups of individuals that are prioritized for vaccination. For each group, the schedule displays

¹ Rhode Island reported Widespread activity for the week of November 22 to November 28, 2009. Percentages of influenza-like illness remain above baseline in all five regions of the state. For details see <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/surveillance/>.

² Confirmed and probable hospitalizations and deaths since September 1, 2009

³ Influenza-like illness activity from November 29 to December 5, 2009

the vaccination location, vaccine type, vaccination start date, and special considerations regarding vaccination. This schedule can be found at <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/H1N1Advisories/H1N1FluVaccinationChart.pdf>.

National flu public service announcements campaign

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) joined with the Ad Council to launch a new nationwide public service announcements (PSA) campaign, *Together We Can Fight the Flu*, that encourages Americans to get vaccinated against H1N1. The PSAs are being distributed to national media outlets and are also available to view online at <http://www.flu.gov/psa/#fightvideo>. HHS also recently launched a new video, "Americans Speak Out: Why We Got the Flu Vaccine," that features Americans talking about why they chose to get vaccinated against H1N1 to protect themselves and their communities. To view the video, see <http://www.flu.gov/news/blogs/flu vaccine.html>.

H1N1 vaccination clinic for Rhode Island residents in out-of-state colleges and universities

HEALTH will hold an H1N1 vaccination clinic for Rhode Island residents through 24 years of age who attend out-of-state colleges and universities. The clinic will be held sometime between December 21, 2009 and January 8, 2010. The exact clinic date, location, and hours of operation will be announced when available. In order to plan for such a clinic and estimate the number of eligible students, **HEALTH asks interested students to pre-register for the clinic online before 4 p.m. on December 11, 2009.** Only pre-registered students will be able to attend the clinic. The online registration form is available at <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/schoolh1n1clinics/outofstatecollegeclinics/index.php>.

College and university-based H1N1 vaccination clinics

Nine residential colleges and universities in Rhode Island began vaccinating students against H1N1 flu last week. Over a three-week period, all colleges, universities, and technical schools in the state will host clinics for students through age 24 who are enrolled at those institutions. On December 14, H1N1 vaccination clinics are tentatively scheduled to begin on the campuses of colleges and universities with non-residential student populations. For information about clinics at an individual school, contact that school's health services office. For general information about college and university-based clinics, see www.health.ri.gov.

H1N1 school-based clinic vaccine uptake

In the first 20 days of HEALTH's 28-school-day H1N1 school-based vaccination program, 85,567 school-aged children have received the H1N1 vaccine. Of the students enrolled in schools that hosted clinics during this time period, 75% received the vaccine.

H1N1 Vaccination Clinic For Rhode Islanders (K-12) in Out-of-State Schools

HEALTH will hold its H1N1 vaccination clinic for school-aged Rhode Islanders (K-12) who attend out-of-state schools at the Cannon Building, its headquarters, in Providence. The clinic will run from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. on December 12, 2009. Children who were not pre-registered for this clinic WILL NOT be vaccinated at this clinic. The parents and guardians of registered children received an email with more details about the clinic this week. Any parent or guardian of a registered child who did not receive this email should contact HEALTH's H1N1 Information Line (401-222-8022) or write to H1N1@health.ri.gov.

Daytime school-based H1N1 vaccination clinic schedules

While daytime, school-based H1N1 vaccination clinics start at the beginning of school days, these clinics' closing times vary. Vaccine administrators remain at schools until all of the students who are present and who have submitted permission slips are vaccinated, NOT until all children who have submitted permission slips in advance are vaccinated. **The parents and guardians of children who are attending these clinics should note that a student who comes to school late on the day of his or her H1N1 vaccination clinic risks missing that clinic.**

School-based H1N1 vaccination clinic best practices

Sound planning and good clinic management have helped all of HEALTH's daytime and evening school-based vaccination clinics run smoothly. Many clinic organizers have advised HEALTH of specific best practices that worked at their sites.

Daytime Clinics:

- Arrange for a substitute school nurse teacher to handle students' routine health issues.
- If additional H1N1 Vaccination Teams assist at your school, avoid overcrowding the observation area by pacing vaccine administration.
- Ensure that students leave observation areas promptly after their 15 minutes of observation pass and don't loiter.
- Provide an adequate number of chairs in the observation area.
- Have the day's list of absences at registration tables. This will ensure that only students who are officially present for the day will be vaccinated and will prevent clinic organizers from having to search for absent students who had returned consent forms in advance.
- Set aside one or more staff members without specific assignments. They can troubleshoot.
- Use stickers or stamps to identify students who are registered for their vaccinations.
- Keep school staffers who answer parents' phone calls updated about clinic plans and policies.
- Recruit as many parent volunteers as possible.
- Keep stretchers out of site.
- Be prepared with water for volunteers.

Evening Clinics:

- **Communicate to parents plans to stagger vaccinations (e.g. "Children with last names beginning with the letters A through G will be vaccinated between 4 and 5:30 p.m.").**
- Arrange for adequate security in your clinic's registration area, vaccine administration area and outside of your school. Security outside of your school will help address traffic-flow issues.
- Establish a separate area to vaccinate hysterical or disruptive children.
- Shield children who are awaiting vaccination from children who are receiving their shots.
- Provide an activity for children to keep them calm and occupied during their 15-minute observation periods.
- Arrange tables, chairs and wastebaskets in the vaccine administration area before Rhode Island Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) members arrive.
- Use stickers or stamps to identify students who are registered for their vaccinations to distinguish them from siblings or other children who do not attend your school.
- Have ample school staff to register students. This will ensure an orderly registration process. In addition, familiar faces are comforts to both parents and students.
- Provide clear signage outside and inside of your school that will direct parents to specific areas.
- Be prepared with enrollment rosters at your registration tables.

Resources

- HEALTH at <http://www.health.ri.gov>;
- Archived partner briefings and regular news updates: <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/flu/>
- H1N1 Information Line (M-F 8:30am- 4:30pm) 401-222-8022
- H1N1 email address h1n1@health.ri.gov
- <http://www.flu.gov>